

Message Text

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42

ACTION ARA-10

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SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 PC-01 EUR-12 IO-10 EB-07 /094 W

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R 302211Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2039

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 5505

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: PRESS RUMORS OF POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT CHANGES AND NAMING OF
NEW INA DIRECTOR

SUMMARY: LOCAL PRESS HAS CARRIED VARIOUS STORIES IN LAST
FEW DAYS AS TO POSSIBLE CABINET CHANGES, CHIEF OF STATE'S
STATE OF UNION ADDRESS IN WHICH IT IS THOUGHT HE MAY
ANNOUNCE DURATION OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND POSSIBLE
SHIFTS IN MILITARY COMMANDS. EMBASSY UNABLE TO CONFIRM
RUMORS. IN ADDITION, RIGOBERTO SANDOVAL COREA HAS BEEN
NAMED AS NEW DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL AGRARIAN INSTITUTE (INA).
END SUMMARY.

1. LAST FEW DAYS HAVE SEEN RAMPANT PRESS SPECULATION
AS TO POSSIBLE CABINET CHANGES, INCLUDING REPORTS THAT
ENTIRE CABINET HAS SUBMITTED ITS RESIGNATION. LATTER
REPORT HAS BEEN DENIED BY MINISTER OF INFORMATION AS GOH
SPOKESMAN AND LABOR MINISTER IN PERSONAL CONVERSATION
WITH PRESS. AMONG MORE PERSISTENT RUMORED CHANGES IN
CABINET IS REPLACEMENT OF FONMIN VIRGILIO GALVEZ BY
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FORMER FONMIN CESAR BATRES DUE TO FORMER'S HARDLINE STAND

ON HONDURAS/SALVADOR DISPUTE.

2. SPECULATION ALSO INCLUDES POSSIBLE ANNOUNCEMENT BY CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR IN JANUARY 1, 1976 STATE OF UNION ADDRESS OF EXTENSION OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT UNTIL 1979-80 AND POSSIBLE MAJOR SHIFTS IN MILITARY COMMANDS. RANKING MILITARY OFFICER HAS INFORMED EMBASSY THAT THERE WILL BE NO MAJOR MILITARY COMMAND CHANGES.

3. RIGOBERTO SANDOVAL COREA HAS BEEN NAMED AS NEW DIRECTOR OF INA, THOUGH HE IS NOT DUE TO ASSUME JOB UNTIL LATE FEBRUARY OR EARLY MARCH. REACTION TO HIS APPOINTMENT HAS BEEN UNIFORMLY FAVORABLE, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF HIS EXPERIENCE AND ABILITY. HOWEVER, ALL AGREE HE IS TAKING OVER A DIFFICULT POSITION.

4. MOST GOVERNMENT ENTITIES ARE BUSY PREPARING YEAR-END PROGRESS REPORTS WHICH WILL BE AIRED ON TV AND RADIO. MINISTERS HAVE ALSO BEEN WORKING WITH MELGAR IN DRAWING UP A NEW LAW DEALING WITH CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT AND A NEW PENSION LAW FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES.

5. COMMENT: WHILE EMBASSY HAS BEEN UNABLE TO CONFIRM OR DENY SPECULATION ON CABINET CHANGES, MILITARY SHIFTS AND POSSIBLE ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXTENSION OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT, WE DOUBT THAT CHANGES WILL BE AS SWEEPING AS RUMORED. FURTHER, WE DOUBT THAT MELGAR WILL NECESSARILY USE STATE OF UNION SPEECH TO ANNOUNCE ANY POSSIBLE CABINET CHANGES WHICH, IF THEY TAKE PLACE, MAY WELL CARRY OVER INTO EARLY 1976. WE CONSIDER IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT MELGAR WILL BE SPECIFIC AS TO PROLONGATION OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT FOR SET PERIOD OF TIME, BUT WILL RATHER BE VAGUE AS TO DURATION, INDICATING THAT GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO COMPLETE ITS PROGRAM. THIS IN PART LIKELY DUE TO LACK OF AGREEMENT WITH SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL. STATE OF UNION ADDRESS WILL LIKELY CONCENTRATE ON PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FUTURE ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL PLANS. EMBASSY WILL CLOSELY FOLLOW STATE OF UNION SPEECH AND INFORM DEPARTMENT OF MAJOR POINTS OF SPEECH AS WELL AS ANALYSIS THEREOF SOONEST.

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